

Appendix D

Commission Site Visits

- Hampton, Virginia- Miscellaneous, Youth Commission, Miscellaneous
- Boston, Massachusetts- The Ella J. Baker House
- Tarrant County, Texas- Outline of Continuum of Services
- Texas Youth Commission- Student Workbook for *Resocialization/Libro de trabajo de resocializacion*
- Missouri Juvenile Statute
(Chapter 219/Youth Services)
- Photographs from Oak Hill and Site visits

Hampton

MEETING WITH MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION
MAYOR ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS of
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MONDAY – JUNE 18, 2001
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Time	Staff	Meeting Location
9:00 am	Chief Thomas Townsend	Police Department – Public Safety Building
10:00 am	Michael Canty – Director – In-SYNC Partnership Keith Rotzoll – Recreation Manager Parks and Recreation	Neighborhood Office Conference Room - City Hall – 5 th Fl Air Power Park
12:15 pm	Lunch	Council Conference Room – City Hall – 8 th Fl
1:30 pm	Council Members Turner Spencer and Rhet Tignor	Law Library – City Hall – 8 th Fl
2:30/2:45 pm	Cindy Carlson – Executive Director Kathy Johnson – Executive Director Ally Graul – Youth Development Director	Coalition for Youth Alternatives, Inc Alternatives Conference Room 2021 B Cunningham Drive – Suite 5
3:30/4:00 pm	Terry O'Neill – Director	Planning Department – Council Conference Room – City Hall – 8 th Floor

**OFFICE OF THE CITY
COUNCIL
F A C S I M I L E
COVER SHEET**

DATE: June 15, 2001

NO. OF PAGES 24
(Including Cover Sheet)

FAX NO. 202-727-3765

TEL NO.

TO: Ali Basir, Special Assistant
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth and Families

FROM: KATHY WERNER
ASSISTANT CLERK OF COUNCIL

MESSAGE:

Attached is a schedule for Monday along with overviews of our youth programs in the City of Hampton. I was able to obtain this information from four departments. Hopefully, this will give you some insight into our programs. Additional information will be provided to you on Monday regarding the Police Department when you meet with Chief Townsend.

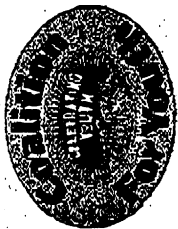
I am unsure if Terry O'Neill from the Planning Department will be able to meet with your group as he is involved in an important meeting that afternoon.

City Hall is located at 22 Lincoln Street - 2 blocks north of the Radisson Hotel. Take Eaton Street (street coming out of the hotel) across Settlers Landing Road - 2 blocks. Make left on Lincoln Street (City Hall is on your right) and park in Visitors Parking. A large statue of a fisherman with a net stands in front of City Hall. Once in the building, take elevator to the 8th Floor. Exit elevator to the left and enter City Council Office/City Manager's Office. I will meet you when you arrive.

Hopefully, your meeting will prove to be very successful. Have a safe trip and looking forward to your visit on Monday.

TELEPHONE NO. (757) 727-6315/6316
FAX NO. (757) 728-3037

Kathy



The Hampton Coalition for Youth

The Hampton Coalition for Youth was established in 1990 to ensure that the city's young people would be ready to become the workforce and community leaders of the 21st century.

The Coalition is the coordinating, planning and catalyst organization for youth issues in Hampton. It is guided by advisory or operational teams of staff, city departments, youth, and citizens. Current Coalition activities include:



Mobilization for Youth

Goal - To create a foundation for the healthy development of all youth by ensuring that Hampton has the necessary services, supports, and opportunities for youth success.

Central to the initiative is the Developmental Assets Campaign which involves the entire community in providing the "assets" or building blocks all children need to succeed.

Parents, youth, neighbors, schools, businesses and places of worship can support the mobilization through a variety of volunteer opportunities. The Coalition provides speakers, newsletters and materials to anyone interested in learning more about developmental assets.



Hampton Youth Commission

Goal - To promote the involvement of youth in the city's decision-making through a representative commission that addresses youth issues.

The Hampton Youth Commission is a diverse and dynamic group of 20 high school-aged young people who represent Hampton's youth on issues that are important to them. The Commission meets once a month on the 3rd Monday at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Any youth or adult can address the Commission at this time.



Youth Are Resources

Goal - To support young people as community leaders and prepare community members to work in youth/adult partnerships within neighborhoods, schools, and organizations.

Over 700 youth are involved in this city-wide initiative. Leadership groups are organized in secondary schools and neighborhood districts across the city to identify and tackle youth concerns. Leadership and staff support are provided by Alternatives, Inc.

Hampton's Youth Planner Initiative: Investing in Community Now and for the Future

"The gaping hole for many of today's youth is a sense of place in the community and a stake in that community. The absence of such bonding strikes at the very heart of what it means to be a person, which is, in part, being beholden to others. It also strikes at the very heart of our political structure, for if teens do not view themselves as being subscribers to the social contract, they will see no sense in following it."

Claiming Our Children
The American Youth Policy Forum

I. Hampton's Driving Force

The historic Aberdeen neighborhood in Hampton, VA was facing a crossroads. Almost a year into their neighborhood planning process, the community was divided on decisions regarding their most strategic investments – repairing the decaying infrastructure of an aging neighborhood, investing in beautification to attract new business and home ownership, or supporting a proposal for a recreation center for the youth. Enter the Aberdeen Leadership Group, a group of local teens with a passion for wanting to make their neighborhood a better place. Through the ensuing dialogue it became clear to neighborhood residents and city staff that the young people didn't support the recreation center proposal. Their vision of community involved lower cost options like a community gathering place and neighborhood unity events. The resulting neighborhood plan builds on the youth's vision of community and potentially saved the city countless resources from an underutilized facility. The neighborhood adults were introduced to a powerful new neighborhood resource, and city government staff learned a valuable lesson on the importance of youth involvement.

Hampton's journey toward involving youth in building community started in 1993 when City Council adopted *A Community Commitment to Youth*, pledging that

"Hampton is committed to becoming a community in which the well-being of children is of primary importance and whose policies and programs treat young people as the foundation of our city's future."

The Commitment set in motion a plan of action that identified young people as resources to their schools, neighborhoods, and the entire community. It challenged the traditional posture of treating youth as the recipients of city services and described them as partners in building community. Implementation of that plan over the next few years meant constantly experimenting, re-evaluating, and learning what it really means to involve youth in building community.

When young people entered that first neighborhood planning process in the Aberdeen neighborhood in 1996, it signaled a new direction for Hampton's city government and its concept of citizen involvement. No longer was youth involvement just about the human services field and what was good for youth, it entered the arena of community development where its impact is felt in the governance, business, education, and civic life of the city. The Youth Planner initiative which resulted from this experience has taken youth involvement to a new level based on meaningful, rather than token, participation and decision making. It sees young people as experts who, when effectively prepared and involved, can contribute to decisions that have long term benefits to the city. It recognizes the essential role that young people play in building healthy neighborhoods and creating a community climate that values all its citizens.

II. The Planning Process

Prior to the creation of the Youth Planner initiative the city's Coalition for Youth conducted the first planning process to engage youth in meaningful roles in building community. Established by City Council to develop recommendations that would make Hampton a better place for children and their families, the Coalition's comprehensive planning and outreach process resulted in a strategic plan for youth. Five stakeholder groups -- youth, parents, business, community/civic, and youth advocates -- contacted over 5,000 of their peers to determine the most strategic city investments to ensure the long term health and success of its youth.

The Coalition's plan recommended four strategic areas of focus for city government: supporting strong families, building healthy neighborhoods, developing youth as resources to the community, and creating a long-term city-wide investment in youth. The focus on neighborhoods evolved into the city's Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative in which city government supports the development of civic and leadership capacity and promotes a planning process in which residents identify and tackle neighborhood issues. The focus on youth as resources evolved into a city-wide youth development approach which, among its extensive capacity-building and service-learning components, recruited and trained the Aberdeen youth in leadership and youth/adult partnerships. The convergence of these two initiatives created the awareness in city staff that government needs to ensure the ongoing involvement of youth in city planning.

The planning process to develop the Youth Planner initiative built on the data and results of the implementation of the Coalition's plan. The two city departments most impacted by the neighborhood plan scenario described above, the Planning Department and Neighborhood Office, recognized a need for a structure to ensure the meaningful involvement of youth in planning at the neighborhood and city-wide level. They joined with the Coalition for Youth and Alternatives, Inc., the city's non-profit youth development agency, as the Initiating Team to begin the planning process. The team's first decision, spearheaded by the Director of Planning, was to hire two young people as employees of the Planning Department. Thus, youth would have an intimate and responsible role in the further development of the initiative.

The Youth Planners began their work by contacting adult resources and their peers to gather input. Adults provided data from previous surveys and thoughts on how to proceed. Over 100 youth in focus groups provided opinions on youth issues and how to improve Hampton for youth. Following the focus groups, the Planners created a steering group of youth and adults to help sift through the data and create a general framework of issues identified as important to young people in Hampton. From this discussion, they determined the necessity for two essential methods of youth involvement -- the development of a youth component to the city's official comprehensive plan, and the creation of a youth commission with the authority to represent youth issues and the power to appropriate funds. In the fall of 1997, Hampton City Council endorsed these two recommendations.

With this endorsement, the Youth Planners set about to "design" the Youth Commission. Through research, discussion with peers, and advice from various adult organizations, the Youth Planners identified the fundamental design of how the Youth Commission should look and operate in order to be an effective voice for young people. By early 1998 the Hampton Youth Commission began operating as a body of twenty high school students from around the City.

A quote from the Preface of the Youth Component of the Hampton 2010 Comprehensive Plan, authored by the Youth Planners, summarizes this initiative.

"The youth of the City of Hampton wish to have a voice. They would like a voice in the way their city grows and develops. The plans put into place now will influence the entire community, but for the most part, will affect the youth of today who will be tomorrow's adults.

A partnership between city leaders and youth would create a progressive, harmonious environment in which the youth would have the convenience to give their input. The city leaders could use this opportunity to teach the youth, in a more in-depth method, about city government. This partnership will help each understand and respect the role of one another. Together, youth and city leaders can mold Hampton into a more enjoyable city for all its citizens."

III. Action Steps

Develop Leadership Groups in neighborhoods. In 1995 Alternatives, Inc., the local non-profit youth development agency, began recruiting, training, and supporting youth to become involved in making their neighborhood a better place to live. The goal was for youth in each identified neighborhood, in partnership with adults, to identify a neighborhood issue and develop a neighborhood-based project to address it. The new partnerships and leadership skills prepared both youth and adults to begin the process of neighborhood planning.

Stakeholders – Youth and adult neighborhood residents participated in training and became stakeholders in their own neighborhood plans.

Organizations – Alternatives, Inc. recruited and trained neighborhood youth and provided a youth development coordinator to facilitate the youth leadership group, recruit and train adult volunteers, and coordinate youth leadership activities in the neighborhoods.

Departments – Neighborhood Office and Planning Department initiated and facilitated neighborhood planning in targeted neighborhoods. Coalition for Youth supported the involvement of youth in neighborhood planning.

Goal – Ensure that youth have impact into local community building through active and respected membership in neighborhood planning processes.

Timeline – September 1995 and ongoing. Currently there are active Leadership Groups in eight of the ten districts of the city.

Funding – The City of Hampton contracts with Alternatives, Inc to provide an array of youth development services throughout the city with an annual appropriation of \$200,000.

Design the Youth Planner position. The first step entailed some in-depth thought to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities for this new position. Desirable norms and expectations were established for the Youth Planner position and the adults with whom they would work. The more administrative aspects of the Youth Planner position were also identified such as hours of work, pay, establishment of work space, etc.

Stakeholders/Organizations/Departments – This was a cooperative effort among the Director of the Planning Department, the Director of the Coalition for Youth, and the Director of Alternatives, Inc. The Planning Department possessed the expertise to understand what the end product might look like while the staff of the Coalition and Alternatives provided essential guidance for the establishment of an effective youth/adult partnership and training for the Planning Department staff on successful interaction with young people.

Goal— Preparation of the necessary environment for a successful youth/adult partnership.

Timeline — June 1996 - November 1996

Funding — All resources necessary for this step were provided from existing resources within the Hampton Planning Department, Alternatives, Inc., and the Coalition for Youth.

Establish the Youth Planner position and hire Youth Planners. Local government in Hampton is nationally known for its innovative structure which allows department heads to pursue innovations without being encumbered by unnecessary bureaucratic procedures. Within such an environment, the Director of Planning was free to reallocate existing departmental resources in order to establish the two positions without any other necessary approvals.

Stakeholders/Organizations/Departments — Hampton Planning Department, Hampton Coalition for Youth, and Alternatives, Inc.

Goal — Create a formal position within local government from which young people could regularly interject a youth perspective into policy formulation.

Timeline — Two Youth Planner positions were formally established in October 1996. The first two Youth Planners began work in November 1996.

Funding — First year funding totaled \$15,000 for the entire Youth Planner initiative. Of this amount, \$13,000 was allocated for salaries with the remaining amount to support equipment, printing costs, supplies, etc. Youth Planners are employed 15 hours per week and are paid \$8.50 per hour.

Develop a structure for youth to be involved in city planning. Beginning in January, 1997 the first two Youth Planners began to design their initiative. This included research, focus groups, data collection, and the development of a plan of action. The plan of action included the development of a Youth Component to the city's 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the establishment of Youth Commission with the power to represent youth and appropriate funds. The Comprehensive Plan would include sections on Youth Space, Transportation, Employment, and Community Interaction -- the issues identified as top priorities of youth. The Youth Component to the Comprehensive Plan would provide a formal and highly visible expression of issues important to the youth of our community. Given its legal stature, inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan would force the community to review potential actions for conformity with recommendations contained in the Youth Component. The Youth Commission would create a visible organization to champion youth issues and provide a recognized forum run by youth for youth to discuss issues of importance.

Stakeholders — Over 100 youth representing a wide variety of organizations participated in focus groups. Hundreds more filled out surveys on what is needed in Hampton for youth.

Organizations — Church youth groups, school clubs, community centers, and non-profit youth groups hosted focus groups and gave input to the Youth Planners.

Departments — The Planning Department housed, supervised, and financially supported the work of the Youth Planners.

Goal - as stated in the Preface to the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan --

"To provide a substructure within the comprehensive planning process that will allow youth to positively and continuously affect the quality of live in Hampton."

Timeline -- November 1996 and ongoing. Two youth planners are employed each year - one Junior who is newly hired, and one Senior who is continuing from the previous year.

Funding — Operational costs for the Youth Planners are absorbed within the budget of the Planning Department.

Planning Commission and City Council Approval. One year after the Youth Planners began their work they were ready to brief the Planning Commission and City Council on their goals and plans and ask for approval of their recommendations.

Stakeholders -- City Council and Planning Commission

Organizations/Departments -- Planning Department and Coalition for Youth

Goal -- Obtain endorsement and buy-in by the primary governing bodies in order to insure support for future initiatives and actions by the Youth Planners and Commission.

Timeline -- Presentations were made December 1997 in order for the Youth Commission to be established in January 1998. Thereafter, updates by the Youth Planners and Youth Commission are delivered to both bodies semi-annually.

Funding -- All costs are absorbed within the Planning Department and Coalition for Youth.

Develop and Implement a Youth Commission. The Youth Commission was created to serve as the governance arm to the city's youth initiatives. Twenty youth were selected to serve as Commissioners, representing all areas of the city. The Commission works in consort with the Youth Planners to develop and champion the Youth Component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Stakeholders -- The youth of the city are represented on the Commission by their 20 peers. Youth participate in speakouts, forums and bring issues to the Commission for discussion.

Organizations -- Alternatives, Inc assists in recruitment of Commissioners from the neighborhood leadership groups and trains all youth to participate.

Departments -- The Youth Commission is located within, and coordinated by, the Coalition for Youth. A department head-level Project Team - with representation from Parks and Recreation, Neighborhood Office, Planning, Coalition for Youth, Alternatives, Inc., and Hampton City Schools - oversees and supports the project.

Goal -- Establish and operate a highly visible/highly functional governing body of youth to champion and implement a youth agenda which both influences and supports the overall mission of local government (To make Hampton the most livable city in Virginia).

Timeline -- The Commission was formed in January 1998. Members serve two-year terms. Each year youth are recruited and trained to replace retiring Commissioners.

Funding -- The Commission operates within the budget of the Coalition for Youth for \$13,000 per year which includes a part time coordinator and stipends for Commissioners.

Develop a Youth Component to the city's 2010 Comprehensive Plan. There are four major topics within the plan as identified by the Youth Planner research.

Youth Space -- Young people need more youth-friendly spaces around our community. In particular, they want more opportunities designed and managed for youth by youth.

Transportation -- Youth without a driver license confront significant challenges getting around a community so oriented to the automobile. Many youth depend on pedestrian, transit, and bicycles to get around. Each of these needs to address the needs of young people.

Employment -- Hampton and the Hampton Roads region have been blessed in the last decade with a robust economy that generates a wide variety of job opportunities; however, few youth know about jobs for which they qualify. In addition, employers consistently comment on the need to better prepare young people for the working world.

Community Interaction -- Young people recognize the importance of positive interaction with other segments of the community. Connections and partnerships with schools, neighborhood organizations, the religious community, recreational organizations, etc. are important to the overall development of youth and ultimately to their ability to implement positive change.

Under each topic, community youth had surfaced almost 100 issues, and new issues emerge with each new group of Commissioners. The next step for Commissioners and Planners was to create the process to turn the creative ideas of youth into a plan.

At the end of each Youth Commission year, Planners take Commissioners through a consensus process to identify one issue under each of the four key topics to be addressed during the next school year. Over the summer, Planners research the topics and prepare information for Commissioners to understand the issue. Then the Commission's Comp Plan Committee surveys their peers, holds public youth forums, and solicits input in order to develop recommendations to address that issue. Planners then develop the document which is subject to public hearing and Youth Commission approval. When the annual installment of recommendations is finally presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption into city policy, it represents countless hours of extensive youth research, deliberation, and consensus.

Commissioners must also monitor the recommendations from the previous year to ensure implementation. A committee of youth actively determines the boards or organizations with which to interface and checks on progress. This involves a variety of tasks from ensuring a young person has been appointed to the Bikeways Commission to convening a meeting between a school and neighborhood to discuss safety.

Stakeholders – All youth of the community are stakeholders in development of the plan.

Commissioners use a variety of outreach strategies to reach a diversity of youth from lunchroom surveys to website chats to public speakouts.

Organizations/Departments – The Project Team provides support for the Youth Commission to conduct its research and outreach through guidance, facilities, resources, and advice. Alternatives provides training in consensus, public speaking, and outreach.

Goal – see above

Timeline – The Comprehensive Plan process has been refined by trial and error since the beginning of the Commission in 1998 to become an annual process. Recommendations are presented to City Council, Planning Commission, and other affected boards and commissions during the summer.

Young people work on the recommendations during the school year.

Funding – Activities within the comprehensive planning process are supported by departments and organizations within the Project Team. Implementation of recommendations must be advocated for within the city budget process or other funding sources.

Appropriate funds for projects for youth and by youth. With young people actively participating in neighborhood planning and implementing strategies to address the issues of the Comprehensive Plan, Hampton needed a new funding source in which youth were not in competition with adult priorities. Thus in 1998, City Council created the Youth Commission Mini-Grant Program through which Commissioners can appropriate \$46,000 as they see fit. In it's first year, the Commission's Appropriations Sub-committee established criteria, guidelines, and request for proposal packets, then set out to advertise their funding to the youth of the city. After extensive marketing, they received proposals of \$110,000 from 29 groups. After numerous hours of deliberation, the committee submitted a slate of programs and budgets for Youth Commission approval. Funding is awarded to initiatives that demonstrate a youth/adult partnership and complement the Commissions goals in the Comprehensive Plan. During FY99 the Commission awarded grants to 14 groups ranging from \$690 to a middle school leadership group working to reduce school suspensions to \$5000 to a team of youth who are designing and refurbishing an updated skateboard park.

Stakeholders – Any youth group can apply for Commission Mini-Grant funding. During FY99 grants went to groups of youth affiliated with schools, neighborhood organizations, churches, and

youth-serving organizations. In some cases, proposals initiated by a small group of youth with an idea were matched with a sponsor to serve as fiscal agent and mentor.

Organizations/Departments – The Project Team assists the Commission in its mini-grant process with consultation and support. They serve as the grievance process if a group objects to a Youth Commission decision.

Goal – Expand the impact of youth/adult partnerships through youth-led appropriations.

Timeline – It took about six months for the Appropriations Committee to develop its procedures and forms, and another two months to advertise. Thus the first year of mini-grants only allowed for projects of about six months in duration. During FY00, the mini-grants will be awarded by November, 1999 and continue through the year.

Funding – The Mini-Grant Program is funded by City Council through re-appropriation of dollars within the General Fund. The Coalition for Youth is currently approaching businesses and writing grants to grow the annual fund.

IV. Benefits of the Youth Planner Initiative

Better Kids

We are growing future leaders and citizens. Youth involvement allows young people to become accustomed to interacting with local government at an early age, and teaches them the skills to work as active, informed citizens.

All youth who participate gain skills and knowledge. Not only do youth benefit who serve on the Commission, those who participate in neighborhood and school planning processes, and even those who interact on the internet, will benefit.

We are raising expectations for youth behavior. Many youth currently do not participate in any civic activity because they do not believe they are accepted by the community. Hampton's planning program believes "If we don't use our youth, we'll lose our youth." The expectation is that all youth can and will contribute to the well-being of the community.

Better Decisions

Decision making regarding youth concerns is placed in the hands of those who stand to benefit most from the decisions and who have the most first hand knowledge of the issues. Youth bring a wealth of knowledge to a planning process and a creative approach to improving quality of life in the community. As adults learn to listen, youth input ensures more relevant decisions.

Better decisions translate into a more youth-friendly community and help avoid costly mistakes. Hampton has already experienced how youth input into planning public space can ensure greater accessibility and attractiveness of that space to a primary customer.

With authority for resource allocation and implementation of recommendations has come accountability for results of decisions. Youth Commissioners and Planners have learned to weigh and prioritize projects and recommendations based on their benefit to youth and their greatest potential for reaching the desired outcomes.

The presence of youth has broadened the awareness of adult decision makers. Youth planning has already spread to other departments of city hall. Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Police now regularly involve youth in planning and seek their advice on relevant issues. Young people have become active in advocating for recreational, environmental, and safety issues.

Better Community

Hampton's Youth Planner initiative provides an effective means to engage a key stakeholder group that is typically under-represented in local government and under-utilized in building community. In Hampton, this translates to over 20,000 new resources to take ownership in the future of the community.

The opportunity for different generations to work together benefits everyone. The presence of youth in planning and community building had a tremendous impact in breaking down negative stereotypes in Hampton. The diversity of opinion and experience brought to each planning process has created a richness of public dialogue and an increase in creative problem solving.

Empowering youth with responsibility and authority creates a positive community climate for youth. Not only does a Youth Planner initiative "raise the bar" of expectations of what youth can be, it creates the kind of community where youth want to return and raise their own families.

V. Replication and Advice

A Youth Planner initiative can be replicated in any community that embraces the value of inclusive citizen involvement and is willing to broaden its understanding of its stakeholders. The following guidance might be considered in planning this type of initiative.

It's important to have a champion for youth involvement and a city government culture that encourages innovation and risk taking.

Initial success will depend on reallocation of resources rather than dependence on a new allocation.

Success is made easier if there is some type of youth/adult partnership infrastructure in place.

The Planning Department must be committed to devoting as much attention and resources to the Youth Planners as any other staff position. Youth need guidance and support to be effective.

There must be continuity to the process. Working with youth means losing them just as they hit their peak of effectiveness. Planner and Commissioner positions must be staggered to allow for change.

Most cities have a Youth Council which, with the proper training and guidance, can be empowered to take their work to another level.

Adults involved in the initiative need training in youth development principles and how to operate within a youth/adult partnership. Youth need leadership skills and the opportunity to exercise them long before seeking a place on a board or commission.

The work of youth planning must be seen as a significant contribution to the success of the community.

APPENDIX A

AN OVERVIEW OF ALTERNATIVES, INC. YOUTH PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

HAMPTON CITY SCHOOLS

Alternatives is under contract to the Hampton City Schools to provide training and opportunities that allow students, parents and faculty to come together to create safe, productive, and rewarding learning environments. At the core of these projects is our belief that issues within a school can best be addressed by finding meaningful roles for everyone. Since 1982, Alternatives' contract with the Hampton City Schools has trained students in leadership skills and helped to create meaningful opportunities to practice those skills. We also train faculty and parents to work more effectively with young people in problem-solving partnerships. Alternatives' trains an average of 750 students and 125 faculty each year. The following are the youth placement opportunities Alternatives provides within the Hampton City School system:

Leadership Role in the Implementation of School Improvement Plans – Alternatives staff facilitate the development of the secondary school improvement plans for the entire school system and work with principals, students, parents, and faculty throughout the year to ensure that these plans are successful. These improvement plans have a number of opportunities that allow youth to have an impact on the school they attend or the entire system. The following are the youth involvement opportunities already identified:

- **Superintendent's Advisory Group** – Alternatives recruits, trains and helps facilitate students who assist the Superintendent and his senior staff in providing a student perspective to system issues. Some of the issues addressed include minimum GPA for extra curricular activities, student rights and responsibilities, improving student success in the transition from 8th to 9th grade, and making the school calendar more conducive to learning. The Superintendent has incorporated the student's suggestions and recommendations in his final report on each of these issues.
- **Principal and Central Office Advisory Groups** – Alternatives recruits, trains and helps facilitate student groups at every middle and high school as well as two elementary schools, to work with principals and faculty to reduce or eliminate issues that are negatively impacting the building's learning environment. Each of these groups identifies the issues to be addressed, develops an action plan and measures its results.
- **Middle School Student Assistance Program** – An Alternatives-led experiment to provide traditional Student Assistance Program services using a youth development has been adopted by the school system and is currently operating in all six middle schools in the system. These efforts allow student's who are traditionally seen as problems to receive the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to shift the way they are viewed-from recipients of services to resources to change.
- **Leadership Course** – Alternatives has developed and implemented a leadership curriculum which students can participate in for credit. We offer this class during the summer and during the regular school year each year. Plans exist to expand this opportunity to a high school/college dual-enrollment course.
- **Teacher Training** – Alternatives provides a variety of training for school faculty offering continuing education credit. These include, but are not limited to, training in improving teacher-student relationships, developmental assets, youth as resources, and youth development strategies in the classroom. A youth and adult team of facilitators leads all of our training offerings. Using youth as facilitators has a great impact on the attitudes and behaviors of teachers and makes their shift to viewing students as resources more easily accomplished.

CITY OF HAMPTON

The City of Hampton contracts with Alternatives to provide training and opportunities for young people and adults to come together throughout the city as active participants in building a more caring community. Since 1991 Alternatives has been helping the city find meaningful ways to resource Hampton's young people. Over 2,000 youth and 400 adults have participated in training offered by Alternatives. These individuals have been instrumental in changing the way the city views and involves its 18 and under population. The following are the youth placement opportunities Alternatives provides within the City of Hampton:

Youth in Government: Alternatives provides training and technical assistance to departments and commissions in Hampton to ensure that they have the capacity to benefit from youth input and decision making. The following are the strategies already identified:

- **Youth Commission** - The City of Hampton has one of the strongest and most empowered Youth Commissions in the country. This group of 20 representative youth has authority and responsibility equal to any adult commission. It also has complete control over a significant Council appropriated budget which it allocates to youth-lead activities throughout the city. Alternatives provides all of the training services to the members of the Youth Commission.
- **Planning Department** - This department has redone its budget to allow them to employ two high school students as part of their staff. These students are responsible for the development and oversight of the youth component of the City's Comprehensive Plan and act as staff to the Youth Commission. Alternatives provides training for both the adults and youth in the department and is also available in a personnel support role.
- **Public Works Department** - This department involves youth within their Environmental Affairs Division by instituting a group known as Youth Environmental Action in Hampton. This group of youth is actively involved in the environmental planning and programming of the city. Alternatives helps the department recruit and train the youth and co-facilitates this opportunity.
- **Parks and Recreation Department** - Forty percent of this department's Advisory Board are young people. They also hire high school students for a number of positions within their Community Centers and within their park system. They are now considering ways to employ young people in more administrative and policy making roles. Alternatives assists this department with recruitment and training for their youth-related opportunities.
- **Police Division** - Alternatives and the Hampton Police Division have developed a project which brings police officers and youth from different neighborhoods together to identify and solve problems created by violence or drug related activities. Alternatives recruits the youth, trains both the police and youth, and facilitates their efforts to make an impact in the neighborhoods. The neighborhoods involved in these youth-police partnerships have realized significant reductions in youth-related crime.
- **Neighborhood Commission** - Hampton's Neighborhood Office and the Neighborhood Commission ensure that youth from the city's neighborhoods have a voice in the business of their neighborhoods by placing two youth on the Commission as members and eighteen others in an advisory capacity. Alternatives is a member of the Commission and assists the Neighborhood Office staff in developing strategies to improve the effectiveness of the youth serving on this Commission.
- **Unity Commission** - Hampton's Unity Commission is responsible for ensuring that the City celebrates the differences of its citizens and addresses issues that arise due to a violation of a citizen's civil rights. This Commission has 20% youth representation. Unfortunately this youth and adult partnership has not been as effective as others so

Alternatives is working with the Commission staff to identify strategies for improving the effectiveness of the youth serving as commissioners.

- **Arts Commission** - This Commission has two youth representatives and has enlisted Alternatives to help create a youth advisory group to assist the Commission regarding decisions that impact youth and to get more youth interested and participating in Commission sponsored programs.

Other City of Hampton-based Services: Alternatives also provides training, opportunities, consultation, and technical assistance through the following projects:

- **Developmental Assets Mobilization** - Alternatives provides staff support to the Hampton Coalition for Youth in its efforts to make Hampton a city that is intentional and successful about increasing the developmental assets of every child in the city.
- **Neighborhood-based Leadership Groups** - Alternatives assists youth and adult residents in eleven of Hampton's neighborhoods to work together on projects designed to allow young people, who have historically been excluded from community planning and action, to become meaningful and active participants.
- **After-School Centers** - The city and school system are working hard to ensure that school facilities become after-school resources to the residents of the neighborhoods they serve. Alternatives ensures that young people are part of the decision-making, design, and implementation of every after-school facility.
- **Youth and Adult Neighborhood College** - Alternatives has created a curriculum for training youth and adults to successfully work together to accomplish neighborhood, school, or community based projects or to address meaningful issues.
- **Youth Mapping, YouthLink and YouthWorks** - (See below)

CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS

Alternatives has provided services in the City of Newport News since 1973. These services and the strategies we employ have changed drastically over the years but the basic principles that govern how we work with young people have not changed.

- **Newport News Alliance for Youth** - Alternatives was one of the charter organizations for this group of 30 organizations and individuals dedicated to ensuring every child in Newport News grows up well nurtured and fully developed. Our role in this organization is as Board member, consultant, and provider. Alternatives has been instrumental in getting the Alliance to involve youth throughout its services. The newest issue being addressed by the Alliance is increasing the cultural opportunities available to the youth of the city. Young people will certainly have the opportunity to be involved throughout the planning and implementation of this initiative.
- **Newport News School Faculty Training** - Alternatives has been contracted by the Newport News Schools to provide training on a variety of subjects to the faculty within their school system. Early successes with this contract indicate that we can expect these training opportunities to grow during subsequent years. As in Hampton all of the training offered by Alternatives involves co-facilitators who are youth.
- **YouthLink and YouthWorks** - (See below)

YOUTHLINK

Alternatives' continues to sponsor a web site of youth-related information, designed and maintained by young people for the youth of Hampton Roads. The site, www.yl-va.org, is a fast, accurate, free on-line connection for information that young people have determined is important to them. Our intention is to have YouthLink address the youth-related issues and services of all young people in all 17 Hampton Roads cities. During the upcoming year we will partner with the larger network system, GoHamptonRoads.com, to ensure sufficient resources are available to continue to offer this service.

YOUTH MAPPING

Alternatives' staff have been trained by the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research to conduct Youth Mapping projects throughout the Hampton Roads area. In Youth Mapping trained young people canvass the city to collect data that is important to them and then transform this data into systems that can provide the information quickly and efficiently to all those interested. We have completed citywide projects in Hampton and Newport News. Next we will map Hampton's neighborhoods to help them create an awareness of the array of services and opportunities available on a more local level.

YOUTHWORKS

The newest and fastest growing project at Alternatives is YouthWorks, an individualized curriculum that prepares 15 - 20 year olds in the behaviors and attitudes needed to be successful in the world of work. A key element of YouthWorks is that we guarantee every young person who completes the project a meaningful job in a field that interests them. This project is part of the WIA service delivery system. A separate project within YouthWorks is Courtesy KIDZ. This project trains young people to work with Business Improvement Districts to reduce the negative stereotyping of youth by these Districts older shoppers. We are in the fifth year of this highly successful effort.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

Alternatives' staff are certified trainers for the Virginia Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control. In addition, our staff have written three curriculums that integrate tobacco information into traditionally non-health-related disciplines, K-12. These curricula are highly correlated to the state-mandated Standards of Learning. Alternatives will continue to provide these trainings locally, statewide, and nationally. All of this training is provided using youth and adult facilitation teams.

DEWITT WALLACE - READERS' DIGEST BEST INITIATIVE

Alternatives' Training Institute is the recipient of a three-year DeWitt Wallace-Readers Digest Fund grant for the development of a system of professional development for youth workers. This training system, known as B.E.S.T. (Building Exemplary Systems of Training) has been operating successfully for the past 2 years. Alternatives is the lead agency working in partnership with Thomas Nelson Community College to develop a multi-entry training system for both new and veteran youth workers. We are the only one of the 16 funded sites that has incorporated youth into the training team.

STATE-WIDE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROJECT

Alternatives has been awarded 3 years of funding from Virginia's Department of Health to provide sexual violence prevention training to up to fourteen communities in Virginia. This effort will build youth and adult partnerships in these communities that will support and ensure clear and consistent intolerance to sexual violence, specifically among middle and high school students. To ensure success Alternatives will be working with the Virginia Prevention Task Force and the local CSB prevention staff from each of these communities. The training team for this project includes a number of local youth. Each of the fourteen sites is required to also involve youth on their teams.

CONTRACTED TRAINING AND CONSULTATION SERVICES

Alternatives, Inc. provides a variety of training, consultation, and technical assistance services to other municipalities, school systems and organizations interested in the expertise we have gained over the 28 years we have existed. Each contract is individually developed to ensure that the services provided have the highest potential of improving the knowledge, skills or abilities of the recipient. Each contract is made with the understanding that teams involving both youth and adults will perform all of our work.

Hampton's Youth Planner Initiative: Investing in Community Now and for the Future

"The gaping hole for many of today's youth is a sense of place in the community and a stake in that community. The absence of such bonding strikes at the very heart of what it means to be a person, which is, in part, being beholden to others. It also strikes at the very heart of our political structure, for if teens do not view themselves as being subscribers to the social contract, they will see no sense in following it."

Claiming Our Children,
The American Youth Policy Forum

I. Hampton's Driving Force

The historic Aberdeen neighborhood in Hampton, VA was facing a crossroads. Almost a year into their neighborhood planning process, the community was divided on decisions regarding their most strategic investments – repairing the decaying infrastructure of an aging neighborhood, investing in beautification to attract new business and home ownership, or supporting a proposal for a recreation center for the youth. Enter the Aberdeen Leadership Group, a group of local teens with a passion for wanting to make their neighborhood a better place. Through the ensuing dialogue it became clear to neighborhood residents and city staff that the young people didn't support the recreation center proposal. Their vision of community involved lower cost options like a community gathering place and neighborhood unity events. The resulting neighborhood plan builds on the youth's vision of community and potentially saved the city countless resources from an underutilized facility. The neighborhood adults were introduced to a powerful new neighborhood resource, and city government staff learned a valuable lesson on the importance of youth involvement.

Hampton's journey toward involving youth in building community started in 1993 when City Council adopted *A Community Commitment to Youth*, pledging that

"Hampton is committed to becoming a community in which the well-being of children is of primary importance and whose policies and programs treat young people as the foundation of our city's future."

The Commitment set in motion a plan of action that identified young people as resources to their schools, neighborhoods, and the entire community. It challenged the traditional posture of treating youth as the recipients of city services and described them as partners in building community. Implementation of that plan over the next few years meant constantly experimenting, re-evaluating, and learning what it really means to involve youth in building community.

When young people entered that first neighborhood planning process in the Aberdeen neighborhood in 1996, it signaled a new direction for Hampton's city government and its concept of citizen involvement. No longer was youth involvement just about the human services field and what was good for youth, it entered the arena of community development where its impact is felt in the governance, business, education, and civic life of the city. The Youth Planner initiative which resulted from this experience has taken youth involvement to a new level based on meaningful, rather than token, participation and decision making. It sees young people as experts who, when effectively prepared and involved, can contribute to decisions that have long term benefits to the city. It recognizes the essential role that young people play in building healthy neighborhoods and creating a community climate that values all its citizens.

II. The Planning Process

Prior to the creation of the Youth Planner initiative the city's Coalition for Youth conducted the first planning process to engage youth in meaningful roles in building community. Established by City Council to develop recommendations that would make Hampton a better place for children and their families, the Coalition's comprehensive planning and outreach process resulted in a strategic plan for youth. Five stakeholder groups – youth, parents, business, community/civic, and youth advocates – contacted over 5,000 of their peers to determine the most strategic city investments to ensure the long term health and success of its youth.

The Coalition's plan recommended four strategic areas of focus for city government: supporting strong families, building healthy neighborhoods, developing youth as resources to the community, and creating a long-term city-wide investment in youth. The focus on neighborhoods evolved into the city's Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative in which city government supports the development of civic and leadership capacity and promotes a planning process in which residents identify and tackle neighborhood issues. The focus on youth as resources evolved into a city-wide youth development approach which, among its extensive capacity-building and service-learning components, recruited and trained the Aberdeen youth in leadership and youth/adult partnerships. The convergence of these two initiatives created the awareness in city staff that government needs to ensure the ongoing involvement of youth in city planning.

The planning process to develop the Youth Planner initiative built on the data and results of the implementation of the Coalition's plan. The two city departments most impacted by the neighborhood plan scenario described above, the Planning Department and Neighborhood Office, recognized a need for a structure to ensure the meaningful involvement of youth in planning at the neighborhood and city-wide level. They joined with the Coalition for Youth and Alternatives, Inc., the city's non-profit youth development agency, as the Initiating Team to begin the planning process. The team's first decision, spearheaded by the Director of Planning, was to hire two young people as employees of the Planning Department. Thus, youth would have an intimate and responsible role in the further development of the initiative.

The Youth Planners began their work by contacting adult resources and their peers to gather input. Adults provided data from previous surveys and thoughts on how to proceed. Over 100 youth in focus groups provided opinions on youth issues and how to improve Hampton for youth. Following the focus groups, the Planners created a steering group of youth and adults to help sift through the data and create a general framework of issues identified as important to young people in Hampton. From this discussion, they determined the necessity for two essential methods of youth involvement -- the development of a youth component to the city's official comprehensive plan, and the creation of a youth commission with the authority to represent youth issues and the power to appropriate funds. In the fall of 1997, Hampton City Council endorsed these two recommendations.

With this endorsement, the Youth Planners set about to "design" the Youth Commission. Through research, discussion with peers, and advice from various adult organizations, the Youth Planners identified the fundamental design of how the Youth Commission should look and operate in order to be an effective voice for young people. By early 1998 the Hampton Youth Commission began operating as a body of twenty high school students from around the City.

A quote from the Preface of the Youth Component of the Hampton 2010 Comprehensive Plan, authored by the Youth Planners, summarizes this initiative.

"The youth of the City of Hampton wish to have a voice. They would like a voice in the way their city grows and develops. The plans put into place now will influence the entire community, but for the most part, will affect the youth of today who will be tomorrow's adults.

A partnership between city leaders and youth would create a progressive, harmonious environment in which the youth would have the convenience to give their input. The city leaders could use this opportunity to teach the youth, in a more in-depth method, about city government. This partnership will help each understand and respect the role of one another. Together, youth and city leaders can mold Hampton into a more enjoyable city for all its citizens."

III. Action Steps

Develop Leadership Groups in neighborhoods. In 1995 Alternatives, Inc., the local non-profit youth development agency, began recruiting, training, and supporting youth to become involved in making their neighborhood a better place to live. The goal was for youth in each identified neighborhood, in partnership with adults, to identify a neighborhood issue and develop a neighborhood-based project to address it. The new partnerships and leadership skills prepared both youth and adults to begin the process of neighborhood planning.

Stakeholders – Youth and adult neighborhood residents participated in training and became stakeholders in their own neighborhood plans.

Organizations – Alternatives, Inc. recruited and trained neighborhood youth and provided a youth development coordinator to facilitate the youth leadership group, recruit and train adult volunteers, and coordinate youth leadership activities in the neighborhoods.

Departments – Neighborhood Office and Planning Department initiated and facilitated neighborhood planning in targeted neighborhoods. Coalition for Youth supported the involvement of youth in neighborhood planning.

Goal – Ensure that youth have impact into local community building through active and respected membership in neighborhood planning processes.

Timeline – September 1995 and ongoing. Currently there are active Leadership Groups in eight of the ten districts of the city.

Funding – The City of Hampton contracts with Alternatives, Inc to provide an array of youth development services throughout the city with an annual appropriation of \$200,000.

Design the Youth Planner position. The first step entailed some in-depth thought to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities for this new position. Desirable norms and expectations were established for the Youth Planner position and the adults with whom they would work. The more administrative aspects of the Youth Planner position were also identified such as hours of work, pay, establishment of work space, etc.

Stakeholders/Organizations/Departments – This was a cooperative effort among the Director of the Planning Department, the Director of the Coalition for Youth, and the Director of Alternatives, Inc. The Planning Department possessed the expertise to understand what the end product might look like while the staff of the Coalition and Alternatives provided essential guidance for the establishment of an effective youth/adult partnership and training for the Planning Department staff on successful interaction with young people.

Goal – Preparation of the necessary environment for a successful youth/adult partnership.

Timeline – June 1996 – November 1996

Funding – All resources necessary for this step were provided from existing resources within the Hampton Planning Department, Alternatives, Inc., and the Coalition for Youth.

Establish the Youth Planner position and hire Youth Planners. Local government in Hampton is nationally known for its innovative structure which allows department heads to pursue innovations without being encumbered by unnecessary bureaucratic procedures. Within such an environment, the Director of Planning was free to reallocate existing departmental resources in order to establish the two positions without any other necessary approvals.

Stakeholders/Organizations/Departments – – Hampton Planning Department, Hampton Coalition for Youth, and Alternatives, Inc.

Goal – Create a formal position within local government from which young people could regularly interject a youth perspective into policy formulation.

Timeline – Two Youth Planner positions were formally established in October 1996. The first two Youth Planners began work in November 1996.

Funding – First year funding totaled \$15,000 for the entire Youth Planner initiative. Of this amount, \$13,000 was allocated for salaries with the remaining amount to support equipment, printing costs, supplies, etc. Youth Planners are employed 15 hours per week and are paid \$8.50 per hour.

Develop a structure for youth to be involved in city planning. Beginning in January, 1997 the first two Youth Planners began to design their initiative. This included research, focus groups, data collection, and the development of a plan of action. The plan of action included the development of a Youth Component to the city's 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the establishment of Youth Commission with the power to represent youth and appropriate funds. The Comprehensive Plan would include sections on Youth Space, Transportation, Employment, and Community Interaction -- the issues identified as top priorities of youth. The Youth Component to the Comprehensive Plan would provide a formal and highly visible expression of issues important to the youth of our community. Given its legal stature, inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan would force the community to review potential actions for conformity with recommendations contained in the Youth Component. The Youth Commission would create a visible organization to champion youth issues and provide a recognized forum run by youth for youth to discuss issues of importance.

Stakeholders – Over 100 youth representing a wide variety of organizations participated in focus groups. Hundreds more filled out surveys on what is needed in Hampton for youth.

Organizations – Church youth groups, school clubs, community centers, and non-profit youth groups hosted focus groups and gave input to the Youth Planners.

Departments – The Planning Department housed, supervised, and financially supported the work of the Youth Planners.

Goal - as stated in the Preface to the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan –

“To provide a substructure within the comprehensive planning process that will allow youth to positively and continuously affect the quality of live in Hampton.”

Timeline – November 1996 and ongoing. Two youth planners are employed each year - one Junior who is newly hired, and one Senior who is continuing from the previous year.

Funding – Operational costs for the Youth Planners are absorbed within the budget of the Planning Department.

Planning Commission and City Council Approval. One year after the Youth Planners began their work they were ready to brief the Planning Commission and City Council on their goals and plans and ask for approval of their recommendations.

Stakeholders – City Council and Planning Commission

Organizations/Departments – Planning Department and Coalition for Youth

Goal – Obtain endorsement and buy-in by the primary governing bodies in order to insure support for future initiatives and actions by the Youth Planners and Commission.

Timeline – Presentations were made December 1997 in order for the Youth Commission to be established in January 1998. Thereafter, updates by the Youth Planners and Youth Commission are delivered to both bodies semi-annually.

Funding – All costs are absorbed within the Planning Department and Coalition for Youth.

Develop and Implement a Youth Commission. The Youth Commission was created to serve as the governance arm to the city's youth initiatives. Twenty youth were selected to serve as Commissioners, representing all areas of the city. The Commission works in consort with the Youth Planners to develop and champion the Youth Component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Stakeholders – The youth of the city are represented on the Commission by their 20 peers. Youth participate in speakouts, forums and bring issues to the Commission for discussion.

Organizations – Alternatives, Inc assists in recruitment of Commissioners from the neighborhood leadership groups and trains all youth to participate.

Departments – The Youth Commission is located within, and coordinated by, the Coalition for Youth. A department head-level Project Team - with representation from Parks and Recreation, Neighborhood Office, Planning, Coalition for Youth, Alternatives, Inc., and Hampton City Schools - oversees and supports the project.

Goal – Establish and operate a highly visible/highly functional governing body of youth to champion and implement a youth agenda which both influences and supports the overall mission of local government (To make Hampton the most livable city in Virginia).

Timeline – The Commission was formed in January 1998. Members serve two-year terms. Each year youth are recruited and trained to replace retiring Commissioners.

Funding – The Commission operates within the budget of the Coalition for Youth for \$13,000 per year which includes a part time coordinator and stipends for Commissioners.

Develop a Youth Component to the city's 2010 Comprehensive Plan. There are four major topics within the plan as identified by the Youth Planner research.

Youth Space – Young people need more youth-friendly spaces around our community. In particular, they want more opportunities designed and managed for youth by youth.

Transportation – Youth without a driver license confront significant challenges getting around a community so oriented to the automobile. Many youth depend on pedestrian, transit, and bicycles to get around. Each of these needs to address the needs of young people.

Employment – Hampton and the Hampton Roads region have been blessed in the last decade with a robust economy that generates a wide variety of job opportunities; however, few youth know about jobs for which they qualify. In addition, employers consistently comment on the need to better prepare young people for the working world.

Community Interaction – Young people recognize the importance of positive interaction with other segments of the community. Connections and partnerships with schools, neighborhood organizations, the religious community, recreational organizations, etc. are important to the overall development of youth and ultimately to their ability to implement positive change.

Under each topic, community youth had surfaced almost 100 issues, and new issues emerge with each new group of Commissioners. The next step for Commissioners and Planners was to create the process to turn the creative ideas of youth into a plan.

At the end of each Youth Commission year, Planners take Commissioners through a consensus process to identify one issue under each of the four key topics to be addressed during the next school year. Over the summer, Planners research the topics and prepare information for Commissioners to understand the issue. Then the Commission's Comp Plan Committee surveys their peers, holds public youth forums, and solicits input in order to develop recommendations to address that issue. Planners then develop the document which is subject to public hearing and Youth Commission approval. When the annual installment of recommendations is finally presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption into city policy, it represents countless hours of extensive youth research, deliberation, and consensus.

Commissioners must also monitor the recommendations from the previous year to ensure implementation. A committee of youth actively determines the boards or organizations with which to interface and checks on progress. This involves a variety of tasks from ensuring a young person has been appointed to the Bikeways Commission to convening a meeting between a school and neighborhood to discuss safety.

Stakeholders – All youth of the community are stakeholders in development of the plan.

Commissioners use a variety of outreach strategies to reach a diversity of youth from lunchroom surveys to website chats to public speakouts.

Organizations/Departments – The Project Team provides support for the Youth Commission to conduct its research and outreach through guidance, facilities, resources, and advice. Alternatives provides training in consensus, public speaking, and outreach.

Goal – see above

Timeline – The Comprehensive Plan process has been refined by trial and error since the beginning of the Commission in 1998 to become an annual process. Recommendations are presented to City Council, Planning Commission, and other affected boards and commissions during the summer.

Young people work on the recommendations during the school year.

Funding – Activities within the comprehensive planning process are supported by departments and organizations within the Project Team. Implementation of recommendations must be advocated for within the city budget process or other funding sources.

Appropriate funds for projects for youth and by youth. With young people actively participating in neighborhood planning and implementing strategies to address the issues of the Comprehensive Plan, Hampton needed a new funding source in which youth were not in competition with adult priorities. Thus in 1998, City Council created the Youth Commission Mini-Grant Program through which Commissioners can appropriate \$46,000 as they see fit. In it's first year, the Commission's Appropriations Sub-committee established criteria, guidelines, and request for proposal packets, then set out to advertise their funding to the youth of the city. After extensive marketing, they received proposals of \$110,000 from 29 groups. After numerous hours of deliberation, the committee submitted a slate of programs and budgets for Youth Commission approval. Funding is awarded to initiatives that demonstrate a youth/adult partnership and complement the Commissions goals in the Comprehensive Plan. During FY99 the Commission awarded grants to 14 groups ranging from \$690 to a middle school leadership group working to reduce school suspensions to \$5000 to a team of youth who are designing and refurbishing an updated skateboard park.

Stakeholders -- Any youth group can apply for Commission Mini-Grant funding. During FY99 grants went to groups of youth affiliated with schools, neighborhood organizations, churches, and

youth-serving organizations. In some cases, proposals initiated by a small group of youth with an idea were matched with a sponsor to serve as fiscal agent and mentor.

Organizations/Departments – The Project Team assists the Commission in its mini-grant process with consultation and support. They serve as the grievance process if a group objects to a Youth Commission decision.

Goal – Expand the impact of youth/adult partnerships through youth-led appropriations.

Timeline – It took about six months for the Appropriations Committee to develop its procedures and forms, and another two months to advertise. Thus the first year of mini-grants only allowed for projects of about six months in duration. During FY00, the mini-grants will be awarded by November, 1999 and continue through the year.

Funding – The Mini-Grant Program is funded by City Council through re-appropriation of dollars within the General Fund. The Coalition for Youth is currently approaching businesses and writing grants to grow the annual fund.

IV. Benefits of the Youth Planner Initiative

Better Kids

We are growing future leaders and citizens. Youth involvement allows young people to become accustomed to interacting with local government at an early age, and teaches them the skills to work as active, informed citizens.

All youth who participate gain skills and knowledge. Not only do youth benefit who serve on the Commission, those who participate in neighborhood and school planning processes, and even those who interact on the internet, will benefit.

We are raising expectations for youth behavior. Many youth currently do not participate in any civic activity because they do not believe they are accepted by the community. Hampton's planning program believes "If we don't use our youth, we'll lose our youth." The expectation is that all youth can and will contribute to the well-being of the community.

Better Decisions

Decision making regarding youth concerns is placed in the hands of those who stand to benefit most from the decisions and who have the most first hand knowledge of the issues. Youth bring a wealth of knowledge to a planning process and a creative approach to improving quality of life in the community. As adults learn to listen, youth input ensures more relevant decisions.

Better decisions translate into a more youth-friendly community and help avoid costly mistakes. Hampton has already experienced how youth input into planning public space can ensure greater accessibility and attractiveness of that space to a primary customer.

With authority for resource allocation and implementation of recommendations has come accountability for results of decisions. Youth Commissioners and Planners have learned to weigh and prioritize projects and recommendations based on their benefit to youth and their greatest potential for reaching the desired outcomes.

The presence of youth has broadened the awareness of adult decision makers. Youth planning has already spread to other departments of city hall. Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Police now regularly involve youth in planning and seek their advice on relevant issues. Young people have become active in advocating for recreational, environmental, and safety issues.

Better Community

Hampton's Youth Planner initiative provides an effective means to engage a key stakeholder group that is typically under-represented in local government and under-utilized in building community. In Hampton, this translates to over 20,000 new resources to take ownership in the future of the community.

The opportunity for different generations to work together benefits everyone. The presence of youth in planning and community building had a tremendous impact in breaking down negative stereotypes in Hampton. The diversity of opinion and experience brought to each planning process has created a richness of public dialogue and an increase in creative problem solving.

Empowering youth with responsibility and authority creates a positive community climate for youth. Not only does a Youth Planner initiative "raise the bar" of expectations of what youth can be, it creates the kind of community where youth want to return and raise their own families.

V. Replication and Advice

A Youth Planner initiative can be replicated in any community that embraces the value of inclusive citizen involvement and is willing to broaden its understanding of its stakeholders. The following guidance might be considered in planning this type of initiative.

It's important to have a champion for youth involvement and a city government culture that encourages innovation and risk taking.

Initial success will depend on reallocation of resources rather than dependence on a new allocation.

Success is made easier if there is some type of youth/adult partnership infrastructure in place.

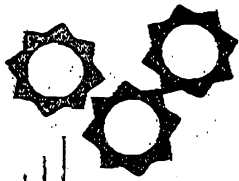
The Planning Department must be committed to devoting as much attention and resources to the Youth Planners as any other staff position. Youth need guidance and support to be effective.

There must be continuity to the process. Working with youth means losing them just as they hit their peak of effectiveness. Planner and Commissioner positions must be staggered to allow for change.

Most cities have a Youth Council which, with the proper training and guidance, can be empowered to take their work to another level.

Adults involved in the initiative need training in youth development principles and how to operate within a youth/adult partnership. Youth need leadership skills and the opportunity to exercise them long before seeking a place on a board or commission.

The work of youth planning must be seen as a significant contribution to the success of the community.



In-SYNC Partnerships

Innovations for Schools, Youth, Neighborhoods, and Communities

Neighborhood Office - 5th Floor City Hall, 22 Lincoln Street Hampton, VA 23669

v. (757)-728-2078 fax(757)-727-6074 email mcanty@city.hampton.va.us

IN-SYNC Partnership Goals for 2001/2002 School Year

- II Program Quality - Assure that each Center or Program offers after school care that meets or exceeds national standards, offers enrichment and educational opportunities that reinforces but does not replicate the existing school curriculum.
- II Neighborhood Leadership - Create Neighborhood Center Boards that draw on neighborhood leaders to guide programming that is aligned with local needs. The Boards also assist with sustainability and program quality.
- II Resources - Expand and formalize public/private/nonprofit partnerships to ensure sustainability and leverages existing community resources.
- II Program Development - Using the successful after school programs at Tarrant and Machen Elementary schools as a starting point, develop two new neighborhood Centers at these sites.
- II Neighborhood Centers- Create the Neighborhood Center Initiative Team to align City and School Resources aimed at supporting Neighborhood Centers.
- II Marketing -- Create name recognition for after school efforts, neighborhood centers and In-SYNC Partnerships in order to expand available resources

Major Accomplishments 1999/2000 school year

- II Over 200 young people participated on a daily basis in free after school programs held at our five Neighborhood Centers (CDBG funded).
- II Over 335 young people were registered in the twelve paid after school programs run by Parks and Recreation. These programs are located in eight elementary schools.
- II Over 160 individuals volunteered in schools and centers. Volunteers gave at least one hour per week. A small group volunteered between twenty and forty hours per week. All made this investment to help insure the success of our young people.
- II New resources were secured to support strong schools and youth success, with a special effort aimed at volunteer resources including a strong partnership with KIDTECH aimed at integrating technology into our efforts.
- II Defined shared outcomes in both the City of Hampton's strategic plan and the Hampton City Schools' strategic plan.
- II Finalized measurable outcomes for youth programs based at Neighborhood Centers.
- II Created a framework for a partnership of agencies that serve children, families and communities at Neighborhood Centers

Partnership Highlights

Reading 2000 - Over 175 city employees volunteering one hour a week to read with students

Fire-School Partnerships - Each fire station adopted a school. Station staff served as tutors and role models for students

AmeriCorps - 25 AmeriCorps members working to enhance our after school tutorial efforts

KIDTECH - operating two Community Technology Centers - Newtown Learning Center and Salina Street Neighborhood Center at Tyler Elementary School

***Vision** - Hampton's youth will thrive in supportive interconnected neighborhoods and schools.*

***Mission** - In-SYNC builds neighborhood-based partnerships that maximize and mobilize families and community resources to promote strong schools and youth success.*

